



## **CITY OF SEATTLE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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### **Project Hire – Frequently Asked Questions**

Project Hire is a job referral program that is designed to assist City employees who are at risk of losing their jobs due to layoff or reorganization. The goal is to transition these employees into alternate positions within the City before their employment ends, or as soon as possible following layoff.

#### **Who is eligible for Project Hire?**

Any regular, probationary, or trial service employee who has been notified of a pending layoff. In some cases, employees who are in a position that is exempt from the classified service may also be eligible.

#### **How do I enroll in Project Hire?**

You need to be nominated by the head of your department. When your department head nominates you to the Personnel Director, they are acting as a reference for you – they are making a recommendation to all City departments that you are a productive and valuable employee who should be retained.

#### **What do I need to do?**

As soon as you are nominated, you will be contacted by a member of the Project Hire Team in the Personnel Department. That person will serve as your Case Manager. They will explain how the program works and what your responsibility is, and they will be your main point of contact for questions and referrals to vacant positions. As job opportunities come up, they will put you in touch with the hiring managers and advocate for you as a candidate.

#### **What are my responsibilities in Project Hire?**

- You need to update your resume on an immediate basis, and make sure that it includes your current job.
- You need to stay in close contact with your Case Manager, and you need to respond quickly to job opportunities as they are brought to your attention.
- You need to review the Opportunity For Advancement bulletin every week for all of the positions that are being advertised in the City.
- You need to maintain an account at the City's Career Center at <http://wald1.seattle.gov/personnel/employmentsystem/AccountLogin.aspx>  
If you don't want to use the Online Application Form, your Case Manager will explain how to file for positions on paper.



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### **What should I do if I am interested in a position that's advertised on the Opportunity For Advancement bulletin?**

- The first thing is to apply for the position, either online or on paper. Make sure that you clearly document how you meet the required qualifications in the ad.
- Next, notify your Case Manager. Your Case Manager will get in touch with Human Resources staff in the hiring department, and make sure they know that you have applied and that you are a Project Hire participant. As long as you clearly document the required qualifications, you will receive priority service, and you will be moved into the interview group.
- Prepare for the interview. Project Hire can get you into the interview group, but at that point you need to compete – with other Project Hire participants and with other employees as well.

### **I just received my layoff notice, and I remember a position that closed for filing a couple of weeks ago that sounded like a really good match for me. Is there any way that I can be considered for that position?**

Notify your Case Manager. Your status in Project Hire is more important than the filing deadline. As long as the selection process for that position hasn't advanced too far, your Case Manager can usually have you added to the applicant pool.

### **Does Project Hire include opportunities for transfer to other departments?**

Yes. The Personnel Rules and the applicable Bargaining Agreements allow the City to waive the requirement to advertise positions on the Opportunity For Advancement. Your Case Manager will be working closely with the Redeployment Coordinators in all City departments to identify vacant positions that match up with your qualifications. If they find a good match, that department can arrange an informational interview for you with the hiring manager. If you are interested, and the hiring manager believes that you are a good fit for the position, they can appoint you without further competition or process.

### **Can I transfer to any position in the City, or just the job title that I'm currently working in?**

- You can transfer to any position that has the same top salary step as your current job, as long as you meet the qualifications.
- You can reduce to any position that has a lower top salary step.



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- You cannot transfer to a position that has a higher salary range without normal competition. You may apply for positions that would result in a promotion as they are advertised on the Opportunity For Advancement.

### **If I turn down an informational interview or a transfer opportunity, does that mean that I will be removed from Project Hire?**

No. If you turn down an outright job offer, you will be removed. An invitation to interview does not constitute a job offer. You do need to respond immediately to the invitation, however, and provide a reason why you don't wish to be considered. Failure to respond may affect your Project Hire status.

### **So it's okay to turn down an interview if the job isn't a good fit for me? What kind of reasons are acceptable for turning it down?**

This would depend entirely on your own situation, but it would generally involve the nature of the duties or the working conditions. If it involves a shift that you can't work, or a location that you can't get to easily, or if the duties aren't a good match for your background or your career goals – it all depends on you. But please do not be too picky – if we don't get a lot of good matches, you might not get too many opportunities to interview. We can only pull so many rabbits out of our hat.

### **How long will I be enrolled in Project Hire?**

Hopefully not for long – if everything lines up right, we'll find a good job match for you, and you won't be at risk of layoff any longer. But if we can't find a solution before your layoff date, you will remain in the program for one year following that date.

### **If I take a reduction to a job that pays less, can I still use Project Hire services to get something closer to my current job?**

Project Hire is limited to employees who are scheduled for layoff. If you are appointed to another position in the City, and you are no longer subject to layoff, then you no longer need Project Hire services. As a regular City employee, you are eligible to continue to apply for positions that are advertised on the Opportunity For Advancement.



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**If I accept another job in the City, do I go on the Reinstatement List for my old job?**

No, you only go on Reinstatement if you are laid off. If you take a voluntary reduction, the rules allow for a return from reduction, with no time limit. If your old job comes back in a couple of years, you could return at that point.

**I have seen positions advertised on the Opportunity For Advancement bulletin that are identified as Out-Of-Class opportunities in other departments. Can I apply for those?**

If it's a good match for you, by all means apply. Under normal conditions, an Out-Of-Class assignment between departments would be like a loaned employee. At the end of the assignment, the employee would return to their regular job. If you're scheduled for layoff, the Out-Of-Class assignment can buy you up to six months of time to stay on the payroll and the benefit plan. And that's six months of time where we can continue to search for a more permanent solution.

**Can I take a temporary assignment with the City and still receive Project Hire referrals?**

Yes. A temporary job will provide you with a paycheck, but it's not the permanent solution that we're looking for. We're going to review every temporary job order for potential matches, and we will contact you to see if you are interested. We can't predict how your situation may change over time, and we'd rather contact you too often than not enough. Please respond promptly if we offer a temporary opportunity.

**What if I accept a job outside the City? Does Project Hire end for me?**

As long as you are eligible for Project Hire and you wish to return to the City, you may remain enrolled in the program. Outside employment will not count against you in any way.

**Should I rely on Project Hire to find a new position for me, or should I conduct a more extensive job search on my own?**

We have no way to predict what kind of jobs are going to come up in the City, how many vacancies there will be in the next few months, or how closely they will match up with your qualifications. We cannot guarantee that we will find a job for you. We strongly recommend that you pursue as many job search activities as you can find – through employment agencies, web sites and newspapers,



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professional associations and networks – and don't forget your friends and family. They can provide ideas, connections, and support as well.

### **Can my supervisor contact other departments to help me find a new position?**

Absolutely. The more people working on finding a solution for you the better. And a supervisor working on your behalf is the best reference possible. We appreciate initiative, brainstorming, networking, and any other effort that might produce a positive result for you or the other Project Hire participants. And we encourage supervisors to network with their colleagues in other departments to discuss the possibilities. (If you don't know your counterparts, now would be a good time to introduce yourself.) If those efforts produce a potential opportunity, the Human Resources units of both the reducing and the receiving departments should be notified. If the proposal meets policy requirements, we would then notify all qualified Project Hire participants for consideration.

### **If I do get laid off, how do I stay in touch with Project Hire services and opportunities?**

Stay in contact with your Case Manager by phone and email. The Online Employment System will still recognize you as a regular employee, and you can continue to log on at <http://wald1.seattle.gov/personnel/employmentsystem/AccountLogin.aspx> to view all of the advertised opportunities. We can also arrange to email the weekly Opportunity For Advancement bulletin to your home computer.

### **I've got a couple of other questions. Who should I contact?**

Your first stop should be your Case Manager. They are in the best position to understand your personal situation and your goals. You can also send questions to [careers@seattle.gov](mailto:careers@seattle.gov)